

Kentucky Adult Education

# Learning for Life

Progress Report 2004



"All people, young and old, need a sense of achievement and hope for the future. Kentucky Adult Education helps more than 120,000 people experience those feelings every year. What a thrill it is to see adults rediscovering the joy and satisfaction of learning."

— Dr. Cheryl D. King,  
Vice President for Kentucky Adult Education,  
Council on Postsecondary Education

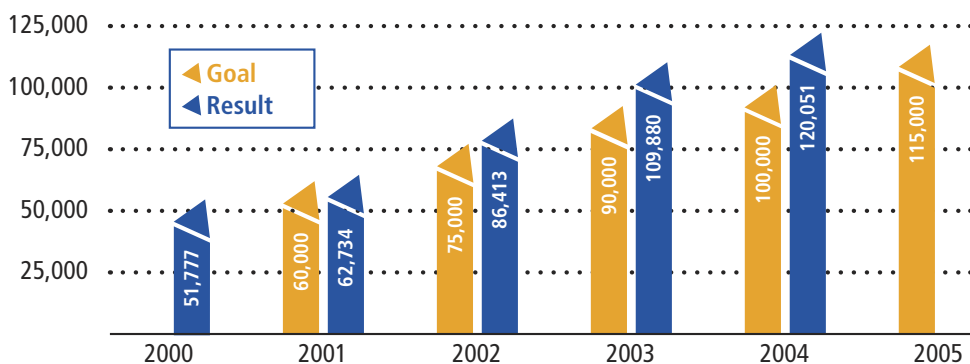


One of the nation's top adult education advocacy organizations recently praised the "astounding success" of Kentucky Adult Education, discovering what we've known for a long time: **Our programs work!**

Our enrollments are at an all-time high and, more important, our students are succeeding. They're getting their GEDs, they're moving on to post-secondary education, and they're getting jobs – or if they already have jobs, they're getting better ones.

Please take a few minutes to look through this report and discover how we are helping Kentuckians achieve their dreams and create a better quality of life for themselves and their families – and at the same time, improving Kentucky's long-term economic health.

### Kentucky Adult Education Enrollment



**Success Story:**  
James Jones, Powell County  
**GED Grad, 51, Finds Virtue  
In Virtual Education**



James Jones was a junior in high school when he dropped out to join the Army. He decided to go back for his diploma in 1991. But he couldn't finish the program because the class times conflicted with his irregular work schedule at the Bluegrass Army Depot.

In 2002 he decided to take another stab at obtaining his GED. This time, to his delight, he found that things had changed and he could study for the test online – at his own pace, on his own time, from his own home. "I had to just feel my way around at first, but it really wasn't hard," he said. "The online stuff I studied helped me quite a bit." He passed the test in June.

**He could study for the test online – at his own pace, on his own time, from his own home.**

So now, at the age of 51, James has a high school credential – becoming the first Kentuckian to get his GED using Kentucky Virtual Adult Education ([www.kyvae.org](http://www.kyvae.org)). With learning in his blood, he's thinking about college.

Any advice to others thinking about pursuing their GED through the Internet? "I'd tell them, if they had the capability to go online, go on and check it out, and see how easy it is. If I can do it, you can do it."



Kentucky Adult Education is recognized as a **national leader** in adult education.

## The Basics:

### Reaching Every Corner Of Kentucky

Kentucky Adult Education programs are designed to improve an individual's ability to read, write, and speak in English; compute; solve problems; and function effectively in the workplace, family, and society. These programs provide free, comprehensive adult education and family literacy services.

Through contracts with local boards of education, community and technical colleges, non-profit organizations, correctional institutions and others, we serve all 120 counties of Kentucky. These providers must meet enrollment and performance goals to qualify for and maintain funding.

Kentucky Adult Education is recognized as a national leader in adult education for our work in family literacy, distance learning, workforce education and transitioning GED graduates to postsecondary education.

# The Honor Roll:

## KYAE Recognized Nationwide For Excellence

For some time now, educators and impartial observers across the country have praised Kentucky Adult Education for its creativity, its ability to forge effective partnerships, and its results. We thought we'd share some of the more recent raves.

- ▶ The national Council for Advancement of Adult Literacy released a report in May 2004 examining the **"astounding success"** Kentucky Adult Education has enjoyed in boosting enrollment in its adult education programs. The report said Kentucky's record is "particularly impressive because KCTCS (Kentucky Community and Technical College System) and KYAE have **much more ambitious goals** than comparable institutions in many states." Despite providing services that "meet or exceed national norms," the report says, Kentucky manages to remain cost-effective. See the Council's full report at <http://www.caalusa.org>. Click on "Adult Education and Literacy and Community Colleges in Kentucky."
- ▶ In late 2003 the National Association of State Chief Information Officers honored Kentucky Adult Education with a Recognition Award for **"innovative use of technology,"** noting that its Kentucky Virtual Adult Education Web site was bringing in thousands of new students. The awards program recognizes technology initiatives which "best assist government officials in innovatively executing their duties and providing cost-effective service to citizens," according to its Web site.
- ▶ Kentucky is **one of only three states to receive federal Workforce Investment Act incentive funding** for the four years it has been available, based on meeting performance standards. Kentucky Adult Education, along with two other agencies, shared in the \$7.2 million in incentive funding over four years.
- ▶ An in-depth evaluation by the consulting firm Thomas, Warren + Associates, released in June, said Kentucky "has been, and continues to be, a widely recognized supporter of family literacy services and **exerts a strong national influence.**" Not only is the program effective, the report said, but participants responding to surveys said they enjoy it and would recommend it to others. View the full 60-page evaluation at <http://kyae.ky.gov>. Click on "Research."

She was 15 when she had her first child, and by 16 Melanie Alexander had left school.

But the Burkesville resident said her former middle-school counselor, Carolyn Lee, wouldn't let her off the hook that easily. "She helped me sign up for GED classes, and the program paid for my GED test," Melanie said. This was in 2001.



Success Story:

## Melanie Alexander, Cumberland County **Former Dropout Drops Back In, Nurses A New Career**

Carolyn later went to work for the federally funded Workforce Investment Act program, where she and other staff talked Melanie into pursuing college. "I had dreams, I guess, but they (WIA staff) are the ones that let me know I could actually go. I never really figured that I could. Without them I don't believe I'd be where I am now," Melanie, now 21, said.

**"...at the time I dropped out, I figured I'd end up as a factory worker, minimum wage, struggling."**

Melanie is now attending Bowling Green Technical College-Glasgow campus, where she is on track to obtain her Licensed Practical Nurse certificate. In addition, she already works full-time for a local nursing home, and plans to pursue her RN (Registered Nurse) or BSN (Bachelor of Science in Nursing) degree down the road.

Married and now the mother of two, Melanie is thrilled that her career is on the way up. "I always wanted to finish school, but at the time I dropped out, I figured I'd end up as a factory worker, minimum wage, struggling," she said. LPNs "don't make a whole lot of money either, but I'm happy; I'm doing something that I love. And I feel better about myself, having an education, for my children."

# Studying For The Future:

## Dropping Out Is Not An Option

Education has always been about the future – a fact that was never truer than right now.

Experts tell us that, of all the jobs to be created over the next two decades, 80 percent will require some postsecondary education. But Kentucky is far from ready for this new reality, with nearly a million Kentucky adults – about 40 percent of working-age citizens – functioning at the two lowest levels of literacy. While we have made improvement, Kentucky still ranks 39th in the nation in the percentage of adults with at least a high school education (82.8 percent), according to 2003 census data.

The bottom line is simple. If Kentuckians don't get a good education:

- ▶ They can't compete for good jobs
- ▶ They can't make enough money to support their families adequately
- ▶ Their children are less likely to succeed in school (and beyond)
- ▶ The state can't make a compelling case to companies thinking of opening or expanding their business in Kentucky

In short, we won't prosper if our citizens are unprepared for the future.

**A task force formed in 1998 concluded that adult illiteracy was "a fundamental barrier to every major challenge facing the state" — from education reform and economic development to its citizens' basic health and well-being.**

# Adult Education Revamped:

## Reforms Strengthen Key Partnerships, Broaden Reach

Recognizing the hindrance that an undereducated workforce has been on the state's economy, Kentucky's leaders have moved aggressively to make education a top priority.

The Kentucky Adult Education Act passed by the 2000 General Assembly created a partnership between Kentucky Adult Education and the Council on Postsecondary Education. The partnership was strengthened in July 2003 by the organizational transition of Kentucky Adult Education from the Cabinet for Workforce Development to the Council on Postsecondary Education. Governor Ernie Fletcher endorsed this structure when his reorganization maintained Kentucky Adult Education at the forefront of education in the Commonwealth.

**In Kentucky, it's not enough to simply "go back and get your GED." As Dr. Cheryl King, the Vice President for Adult Education, is fond of saying, "The GED is not a finale, but a beginning."**

The act increased funding and set the stage for dramatic improvements in the educational status of adult Kentuckians who lacked a high school diploma, functioned at low levels of literacy or wanted to learn the English language.

These changes were designed to improve coordination among the various adult-education services, reach as broad an audience as possible, and move adult students on to the next level. We want to capitalize on the desire to learn while it's

still hot, so that rather than stop with a GED, the adult learner will feel compelled to go on to college. And we want them to arrive well prepared.

In Kentucky, we believe it's not enough to simply "go back and get your GED." To truly succeed, Kentuckians must Go Higher. As Dr. Cheryl King, the Vice President for Adult Education, is fond of saying, "The GED is not a finale, but a beginning."

There was a time when adult education providers did their thing, and community colleges did their thing. You talked to the adult education people if you wanted a GED; you inquired at the college if you wanted a degree.

Agencies with related missions that don't work together well are said to be like silos. People tend to get lost among the silos.

**Success Story:**  
**Tamika Mozee, Jefferson County**

## **Pilot Project Soars, Lets Young Mom Land In College**



That's where a new pilot project comes into play, helping adult-education students at six Kentucky locations make a smooth transition to postsecondary education.

Tamika Mozee is among 2,200 people who have been through the pilot in Louisville. Here, Jefferson County Public Schools Adult Education and Jefferson Community College share classrooms, equipment and other resources to connect the silos for an aspiring college student.

**Adult Education and the community college  
share resources to reduce the number of obstacles  
for an aspiring college student.**

Tamika graduated from Central High School in 1999 and worked several entry-level health-care jobs before getting pregnant in 2001. By the time she was ready to try college a couple of years later, she was told she needed a skills update.

The Community Action Agency, a partner in Jefferson County's adult-education program, provided some basic refresher courses and taught Tamika data-entry skills. She's now taking a math class at JCC, and the public school system has hired her part-time with the Ahrens Adult Education Career Assessment Center downtown, where she counsels people who were in her shoes just a couple of years ago.

"I realized that without some postsecondary education, there's really no way of making it," Tamika said. "My goal right now is to get my associate's degree, and then after that, I'll set another goal."



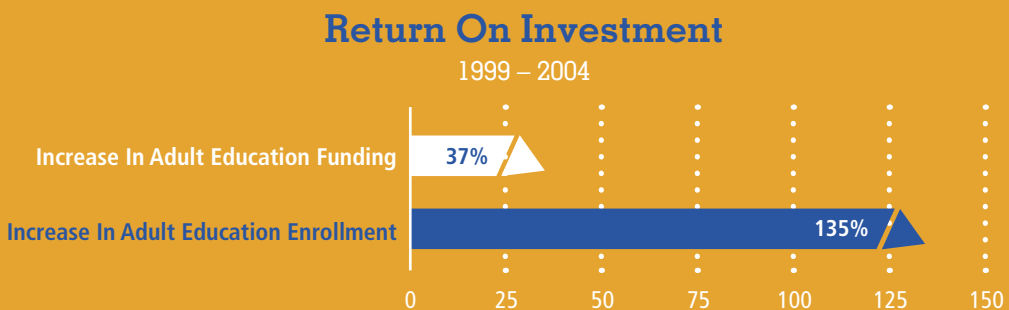
From 2000 through 2004,  
**60,315** Kentuckians earned  
their GEDs.

## The Big Payoff:

### New Structure, New Money

Over the past five years, funding for Kentucky Adult Education has increased by 37 percent.

The return on that investment is a 135 percent increase in enrollment, more Kentuckians with GEDs, more GED graduates in postsecondary education and more Kentuckians prepared for the current and emerging workforce.



# The Big Payoff:

## The Details

**Surging enrollment.** In fiscal year 2004, 120,051 students enrolled in our programs – adult education, family literacy, corrections education, workforce education and English as a Second Language (ESL) classes. This was more than double the number enrolled in fiscal 2000, and more than 20,000 higher than the goal for 2004.

**Products aimed at workforce preparedness.** Kentucky Adult Education helps adult students qualify for Kentucky Employability Certificates and Kentucky Manufacturing Skills Standards Certificates – two documents that signal to employers that the certificate holder has the skills needed for certain jobs. We also have developed a special curriculum for entry-level health care employees.

**Excellent performance.** In nearly every category, Kentucky Adult Education students are improving their literacy skills, getting their GEDs, moving on to postsecondary education or training, and getting prepared for work at levels that often exceed federal standards. In short, Kentuckians are more likely to “go higher” than ever before. For example:

- ▶ 60,315 adults earned GEDs over the past five years. Because people with a high school diploma or GED earn \$7,216 more a year in wages, the potential increased earnings for those people will be more than \$8.7 billion over the next 20 years.
- ▶ The percentage of adult GED graduates who went on to college increased from 12 percent in 1998 to 20 percent in 2001, the latest year for which figures are available.
- ▶ Kentucky is **one of only three states to receive federal Workforce Investment Act incentive funding** for the four years it has been available, based on meeting performance standards. Kentucky Adult Education, along with two other agencies, shared in the \$7.2 million in incentive funding over four years.
- ▶ In fiscal year 2004, 91 counties met performance standards entitling them to incentive funds.
- ▶ 784 Kentuckians were awarded Kentucky Employability Certificates in 2004.

Maria Rivera was born in Philadelphia to Puerto Rican immigrants, and grew up in Massachusetts. A 10th-grade dropout, she moved to Hopkinsville, Kentucky, in February 2001 "looking for a better environment to raise my children in. My husband's sister was already living here, and he came to visit and liked it, told me about it, and we decided to try it. I love this peaceful town."



Success Story:

Maria Rivera, Christian County

## **Busy Daughter Of Immigrants Makes Learning A Family Affair**

Dropping out of school was "one of the biggest mistakes of my life," said Maria, 28. After having two children and taking a job to make ends meet, however, returning to school was a daunting prospect. Having no car further complicated the situation.

But with the help of the Christian County Board of Education's family literacy program, FAMILYCIRCLE, things began to fall into place in 2002.

**"I learned how to be a better parent...and the importance of getting involved in your child's education."**

Maria's son, Jadier, enrolled in preschool, while her daughter, Lourdes, entered fifth grade. Maria studied for and passed the GED test. And, she said, "I got involved in the family literacy program because I saw in it the opportunity to be a better mother and learn how to help my children be successful in school. I learned so much of how to be a better parent, how to spend quality time with your children, the importance of reading to your children, and the importance of getting involved in your child's education."

Jadier is now a straight-A student in first grade, and Lourdes is making As and Bs in seventh grade. Maria, meanwhile, is working full-time at a local factory and going to Hopkinsville Community College full-time. It's still not easy, of course, but Maria is determined to be a teacher one day. Her 3.9 GPA makes such a goal look quite reachable.

"Maria's a great girl," said her family literacy teacher and mentor, Sandy Porter. "We love Maria. She works so hard. I don't know how she does it."

# All In The Family:

## The Value Of Whole-Household Learning

At Kentucky Adult Education, we place a particular emphasis on family literacy. We believe that even the most Herculean efforts to improve the educational attainment of the next generation of children would fail without a strong outreach to their first teachers, their parents. After all, how effectively can Mom and Dad help their child with a homework problem when they themselves can't read?

Kentucky is one of only two states with family literacy programs in every county. In 2004, nearly 4,400 Kentucky adults were enrolled in family literacy programs.

In family literacy, multiple generations within a family learn to study together and otherwise spend quality time together to:

- ▶ Promote the parents' economic self-sufficiency
- ▶ Prepare their children for success in school and life
- ▶ Help parents participate as full partners in their children's education
- ▶ Promote interactive literacy activities between parents and their children



**How effectively** can Mom and Dad help their child with a homework problem when they themselves can't read?

# Collaborations:

## Making Us Better

Kentucky's recent reforms have increased the ways in which Kentucky Adult Education collaborates with other programs, agencies and services. These collaborations improve services and make transitions smoother, so that adult learners don't fall through the cracks on their way to a brighter future. Here's a run-down of some of these efforts.

**The state P-16 Council and Education Trust.** Kentucky Adult Education is a member of this council, which brings together all agencies in the Education Cabinet, from preschool through college. This enables us to align our curriculum and assessments with national benchmarks under the American Diploma Project. As a result, adult students are more likely to succeed at both postsecondary institutions and the workplace. Along with the Council on Postsecondary Education, we fund local P-16 councils to help create seamless education from primary through postsecondary.

**The Kentucky Adult Educators Literacy Institute.** Housed at the University of Kentucky's Collaborative Center for Literacy Development, the institute's mission is to develop "master reading instructors" for every adult education program. Soon there will be a similar effort for math instructors.

**The Academy for Professional Development.** Through the Academy at Morehead State University, adult educators are developing strong leadership skills by linking data-based decisions to program improvement and quality outcomes. The Academy also provides professional development for instructors of English as a Second Language.



These collaborations improve services so that adult learners don't fall through the cracks on their way to a brighter future.

**Six regional transition pilots.** The pilot programs – designed to increase the number of GED graduates who move on to postsecondary education – include institutions within the Kentucky Community and Technical College System (KCTCS), Morehead State University, Eastern Kentucky University and Murray State University.

**Enhanced coordination with workforce and economic development partners.** Partnerships are essential to promoting workforce development efforts through the Kentucky Employability Certificate and the Kentucky Manufacturing Skills Standards Certificate.

**Kentucky Institute for Family Literacy, National Center for Family Literacy.** KIFL provides professional development and technical assistance to help improve Kentucky's family literacy program. Kentucky is recognized as a national leader in family literacy.

# Power To The People:

## Making Learning Available When & Where The Need Is

Traditional classroom instruction is not always the answer for adult students. Kentucky Adult Education is reaching out in creative ways, making it as easy and attractive as possible for people to empower themselves with knowledge.

**Workforce education.** Kentucky Adult Education provides learning opportunities **onsite at businesses** so current and prospective employees can improve their basic reading, math, team-building and communication skills – as well as GED preparedness. **Employees gain confidence, and employers gain more valuable, satisfied workers.** Workforce education enrollment climbed from 8,724 in 2000 to 51,388 in 2004.



KYAE is reaching out in **creative ways**, making it as easy as possible for people to empower themselves with knowledge.

**SkillMobiles.** Many businesses are riding the new wave of education with KYAE's two SkillMobiles, state-of-the-art computer mobile labs that feature a comprehensive selection of online curriculum, desktops, flat panel displays, printers and wireless Internet access.

**Kentucky Virtual Adult Education.** Through the Kentucky Virtual University, [www.kyvae.org](http://www.kyvae.org) allows adults to learn anywhere, anytime, at their convenience. **The first program of its kind in the nation**, Kentucky Virtual Adult Education was recognized in September 2003 by the National Association of State Chief Information Officers for its "Innovative Use of Technology." More than 11,300 Kentuckians took advantage of this "distance learning" opportunity in fiscal year 2004 – a six-fold increase over the number of participants the previous year.

Success Story:  
Twila May, Jefferson County  
**KYAE Employee  
Training Program  
Earns Bank's Interest**



Even the senior vice president for National City Bank has benefited from Kentucky Adult Education. When her employees need computer training, Twila May knows where to turn.

Not only are the classes free, but KYAE instructors come to the bank, making it easier for employees to attend classes such as beginning and intermediate Word, Excel and introduction to PCs. "The ease of it being onsite is one of the things that makes it so appealing," May said.

**Not only are the classes free, but  
KYAE instructors come to the bank.**

During the fiscal year that ended June 30, National City sent 190 employees through KYAE instruction. Since then, another 100-plus have used it.

"We've been very pleased. The quality of instructors is very, very high," May said.

# Other Services:

## Enriching Lives, Adding Meaning & Boosting Productivity

**English as a Second Language.** ESL instruction is provided to adults who want to become more fluent in English, pass U.S. citizenship tests, work on their job-seeking skills, and improve their ability to cope with society. These services are ever more important as Kentucky's Hispanic and Asian populations continue to soar. More than 4,800 students enrolled in ESL services in fiscal year 2004.

**Corrections education.** Kentucky Adult Education contracts with the Kentucky Community and Technical College System to serve residents of state prisons. County adult education programs provide adult education in 72 local jails. In addition to adult basic education services, this program provides appropriate life skills courses as well. Nearly 7,000 inmates received services through this program in fiscal year 2004.



ESL instruction is **ever more important**, as Kentucky's Hispanic and Asian populations continue to increase.

After more than 16 years working for the Osh-Kosh B'Gosh children's clothing factory in Liberty, Ky., Rhonda Godbey figured she'd never work anywhere else. But when the plant laid her off in November 2003, Rhonda's reality changed forever.

Success Story:

**Rhonda Godbey, Casey County**  
**Ex-factory Worker**  
**Assembling New Career**  
**As Teacher**



She knew that finding a decent job with only a high school diploma was no longer as dependable as it once was.

"So I went down to the Casey County Adult Learning Center," said the 38-year-old Bethel Ridge resident. The staff there put Rhonda through a six-month refresher course that included math, English and computer skills. They also guided her toward postsecondary education and gave her the hand-holding she needed to begin thinking differently about her future.

**"I can't really explain how great they were. They were good for moral support too. I appreciate them so much."**

Now she's a full-time student at Somerset Community College and pursuing the dream she had long tucked away – becoming a schoolteacher.

"My mom and dad had always wanted me to be a teacher," Rhonda said. "I had the grades, and I had the knowledge."

Think of it as a dream deferred but not forgotten. "It may take a while, but I'll get there. Without the people at the Adult Learning Center I doubt seriously I'd have gone on to college. I can't really explain how great they were. They were good for moral support too. I appreciate them so much."

# Some Of Our Partners:

## We Couldn't Have Done It Without Them

- ▶ Eastern Kentucky University
- ▶ Head Start
- ▶ Job Corps Centers
- ▶ Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services
  - Family Resource and Youth Services Centers
  - Work and Learn Project
- ▶ Kentucky Chamber of Commerce
- ▶ Kentucky Community and Technical College System
- ▶ Kentucky Department of Corrections
- ▶ Kentucky Department of Education
  - Even Start
- ▶ Kentucky Department of Military Affairs – Kentucky Youth Challenge
- ▶ Kentucky Education Cabinet
  - Department for Workforce Investment
    - ▶ Office for the Blind
    - ▶ Office of Career and Technical Education
    - ▶ Office of Employment and Training
    - ▶ Office of Vocational Rehabilitation
  - Department for Libraries and Archives



- ▶ Kentucky Educational Television
- ▶ Kentucky Higher Education Assistance Authority
- ▶ Kentucky Industrial Development Corporation
- ▶ Kentucky Literacy Partnership
- ▶ Kentucky One-Stop Career Centers
- ▶ Kentucky Virtual Library
- ▶ Kentucky Virtual University
- ▶ Kentucky Workforce Investment Board
- ▶ Local Boards of Education
- ▶ Local Workforce Investment Boards
- ▶ Morehead State University
- ▶ Murray State University
- ▶ National Center for Family Literacy
  - Kentucky Institute for Family Literacy
- ▶ Public Broadcasting System
- ▶ State P-16 Council
- ▶ University of Kentucky
  - Collaborative Center for Literacy Development: Early Childhood through Adulthood
- ▶ U.S. Department of Education
  - Office of Vocational and Adult Education
- ▶ Western Kentucky University



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